



City of Seattle

Edward B. Murray, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development

D. M. Sugimura, Director

CITY OF SEATTLE ANALYSIS AND DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Application Number: 3017177

Applicant Name: Jay Janette, Skidmore Janette Architecture, for Tyson Alexander

Address of Proposal: 1506 NW 61st Street

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Land Use Application to allow a 4-story structure containing 33 residential units. No parking is proposed. Existing structures to be demolished.

The following approvals are required:

Design Review – Chapter 23.41 Seattle Municipal Code (SMC)

Development Standard Departure to encroach ten feet into 15-foot required side setback (SMC 23.45.518.B)

SEPA Environmental Determination – Chapter 25.05 SMC.

SEPA Determination: ☐ Exempt ☐ DNS ☐ MDNS ☐ EIS

☒ DNS with conditions

☐ DNS involving non-exempt grading, or demolition, or another agency with jurisdiction.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The proposed development site consists of one parcel, occupied by a single-family structure, facing onto NW 61st Street, and located a full lot west of 15th Avenue NW, which lot is currently occupied with a commercial building and parking for a Taco del Mar restaurant. The commercial parking is accessed from a widened curbcut on 15th Avenue NW adjacent the alley with another curbcut exiting onto NW 61st Street. Pedestrian access to the subject site is from NW 61st Street

and possible from the 10-foot wide alley to the north that conjoins 15th Avenue NW on the east and 17th Avenue NW on the west. The site totals approximately 4,753 square feet and is zoned NC3-40. It is part of a narrow strip of like zoning running parallel to 15th Avenue NW. The lot immediately to the west of the subject site is zoned Lowrise (LR1) and is occupied by a single-family residential structure. That lot is part of a large swath of LR1 zoning that runs north and south of NW 61st Street and extends a considerable distance to the west.

Until recently the general vicinity was characterized by mostly single-family structures on side streets radiating on either side from the central spine of 15th Avenue NW, a commercial street and arterial developed on either side with small and medium scale commercial structures. The residential structure currently on the site, as well as those directly to the west of the proposed development along NW 61st Street, are sited so that their first floor entries sit atop elevated ground that rises a good four feet above the grade of the sidewalk.

The site abuts a 10-foot wide alley on the north side. There are no mapped Environmentally Critical Areas located on the development site. There are two large trees growing on the lot to the west and located near the west property line of the proposal site. The grand fir located near the southwest corner of the proposal site has been identified as a City of Seattle “Exceptional Tree.” A substantial portion of the root systems of each of the trees extend into the development site. It is the applicant’s intention in siting the building and excavating for it to ensure the continued welfare of each of the trees.

Project Proposal

The development objective for the site located at 1506 NW 61st Street is to erect a four-story residential structure with basement, containing 33 units. As explained by the development team, the goal of the project is to provide workforce housing for those who will rely on transportation modes other than individual automobiles, within easy walking distance to and from the Roosevelt light rail station currently under construction. No parking for motorized vehicles will be provided on site.

The project requires Design Review pursuant to SMC 23.41. There were two Early Design Guidance meetings held before the Northeast Design Review Board, on August 25, 2014 and November 17, 2014. A Recommendation Meeting was held on August 17, 2015.

Public Comment

The official public comment period for this proposal ended on March 15, 2015. The City received approximately three letters commenting on aspects of the proposal. Additional public comments were elicited at each of the Design Review meetings. Specific comments from those meetings are included under the Design Review analysis discussed below.

ANALYSIS – DESIGN REVIEW

Early Design Guidance Meeting – August 25, 2014

The EDG packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number at this website:

http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Review_Program/Project_Reviews/Reports/default.asp.

The packet for the meeting is also available to view in the file, by contacting the Public Resource Center at DPD:

Mailing Public Resource Center

Address: 700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000
P.O. Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

Architects' Presentation

Since the commercial structure to the east abuts its west property line and since the single-family structure on the lot to the west of the development site sits well to the east property line of its lot, there was little massing differentiation in the three schemes presented to the Board. Each was a four-story rectangular box. There was some differentiation in the amount of fenestration proposed for NW 61st Street, but the east side of the box was solid, without any fenestration or openings. The west side of all three schemes showed transparency and openings and decks, single and combined, that extended well into the interstitial space lying between the south façade and the west property line.

Where the schemes differed was primarily in terms of access. Option A ramped up. Option B ramped down, while the preferred Option C was referred to as the “Switchback.” This option showed the main entry at the geometrical mid-point of the south-facing façade atop a flight of stairs rising straight up from the NW 61st Street sidewalk and conjoined at the landing by a ramp that took rise from the sidewalk at the point where it met the west property line. Option C allowed for “a continuous deck along the west side.”

Public Comment

Public comment included the following:

- The proposed building was inconsiderate of existing residents.
- The proposed stacked 30+ units overwhelms and dwarfs the surrounding neighborhood.
- The proposal indicates alley trash and recycle pick-up, but there is no existing alley pickup to make this work.
- There is not much for landscaping as proposed; there should be a courtyard to balance out the open space of the eliminated front yard.
- The balconies overwhelm the neighboring building and strongly impose on the privacy relationships of the neighboring structure.
- The architect’s presentation used the term “sensitive” several times, but the decks, to mention one item, show no sensitivity to their neighbor to the west.
- The front of the building conveys no sense of real interest.
- The large blank wall on the east side, behind the existing commercial structure will have great visibility up and down 15th Avenue NW.
- The project needs a shadow study that deals with the property to the west and to properties north, northwest and northeast across the alley.

Early Design Guidance

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the following siting and design guidance.

- The Board recognized the difficulties inherent in the narrowness of the site juxtaposed to the lowrise residential zoning to the west and the commercial structure on the east, but were disappointed that basically only one alternative was explored with minor variations.
- The architectural gestures that should manifest the announced “*transitioning*” to the LR1 zone were not clearly evident.
- The basements units did not come across as livable units or good architectural planning; a 10-foot deep light well was not a convincing feature as shown, since it did not deal realistically when the presence of the trees to the west or air and light for the serviced units;
- The proposal badly needed a comprehensive light and shadow study, to ascertain with some accuracy how the proposed options shadowed themselves as well as neighbors;
- The project badly needed a better sense of arrival and entry and should not just provide a pragmatic answer to the question “How do I get to my unit?”
- The preferred option needs to address the issue of how some semblance of privacy, quiet and respect is acknowledged for the neighbor to the south;
- The Board would like to see more information regarding the interface of structure and construction, location of window wells and landscaping and pathway, and how this would affect retention of the large trees on the neighboring site to the west;
- The Board would like to see more analysis regarding key features of the existing streetscape along both sides of NW 61st Street;
- The preferred option, with a main entry from NW 61st Street showed the most promise, but the relationship of sidewalk, entry, plinth needed to be worked out in a more convincing fashion (front setback or no setback? plinth or no plinth?).

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

At the time of the FIRST Early Design Guidance no departures were requested:

The Board indicated that a carefully selected set of departures might help to resolve some of the complex issues of the site and would be willing to entertain a request for departures if they could be shown to make for a better design that served both the inhabitants of the building and improved the structure’s relationships to neighbors of the building.

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the meeting the Board requested (5-0) that the project undergo further development and be returned for a second Early Design Guidance meeting.

The Board identified four area of focus for their deliberations: the basement units, the overall massing and exterior design, the building entry, and the requested departures.

PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the following siting and design guidance.

- The Board recognized the difficulties inherent in the narrowness of the site juxtaposed to the lowrise residential zoning to the west and the commercial structure on the east, but were disappointed that basically only one alternative was explored with minor variations.
- The architectural gestures that should manifest the announced “*transitioning*” to the LR1 zone were not clearly evident.
- The basements units did not come across as livable units or good architectural planning; a 10-foot deep light well was not a convincing feature as shown, since it did not deal realistically when the presence of the trees to the west or air and light for the serviced units;
- The proposal badly needed a comprehensive light and shadow study, to ascertain with some accuracy how the proposed options shadowed themselves as well as neighbors;
- The project badly needed a better sense of arrival and entry and should not just provide a pragmatic answer to the question “How do I get to my unit?”
- The preferred option needs to address the issue of how some semblance of privacy, quiet and respect is acknowledged for the neighbor to the south;
- The Board would like to see more information regarding the interface of structure and construction, location of window wells and landscaping and pathway, and how this would affect retention of the large trees on the neighboring site to the west;
- The Board would like to see more analysis regarding key features of the existing streetscape along both sides of NW 61st Street;
- The preferred option, with a main entry from NW 61st Street showed the most promise, but the relationship of sidewalk, entry, plinth needed to be worked out in a more convincing fashion (front setback or no setback? plinth or no plinth?).

DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The priority Citywide and Neighborhood guidelines identified by the Board as Priority Guidelines are summarized below, while all guidelines remain applicable. *Guidelines in italic are particularly related to the Board’s guidance above.* For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

CONTEXT & SITE

CS1 Natural Systems and Site Features: Use natural systems/features of the site and its surroundings as a starting point for project design.

CS1-B Sunlight and Natural Ventilation

CS1-B-1. Sun and Wind: Take advantage of solar exposure and natural ventilation. Use local wind patterns and solar gain to reduce the need for mechanical ventilation and heating where possible.

CS1-B-2. Daylight and Shading: Maximize daylight for interior and exterior spaces and minimize shading on adjacent sites through the placement and/or design of structures on site.

CS1-C Topography

CS1-C-1. Land Form: Use natural topography and desirable landforms to inform project design.

CS1-C-2. Elevation Changes: Use the existing site topography when locating structures and open spaces on the site.

CS1-D Plants and Habitat

CS1-D-1. On-Site Features: Incorporate on-site natural habitats and landscape elements into project design and connect those features to existing networks of open spaces and natural habitats wherever possible. Consider relocating significant trees and vegetation if retention is not feasible.

CS1-D-2. Off-Site Features: Provide opportunities through design to connect to off-site habitats such as riparian corridors or existing urban forest corridors. Promote continuous habitat, where possible, and increase interconnected corridors of urban forest and habitat where possible.

CS2 Urban Pattern and Form: Strengthen the most desirable forms, characteristics, and patterns of the streets, block faces, and open spaces in the surrounding area.

CS2-A Location in the City and Neighborhood

CS2-A-1. Sense of Place: Emphasize attributes that give a distinctive sense of place. Design the building and open spaces to enhance areas where a strong identity already exists, and create a sense of place where the physical context is less established.

CS2-A-2. Architectural Presence: Evaluate the degree of visibility or architectural presence that is appropriate or desired given the context, and design accordingly.

CS2-B Adjacent Sites, Streets, and Open Spaces

CS2-B-2. Connection to the Street: Identify opportunities for the project to make a strong connection to the street and public realm.

CS2-C Relationship to the Block

CS2-C-2. Mid-Block Sites: Look to the uses and scales of adjacent buildings for clues about how to design a mid-block building. Continue a strong street-edge and respond to datum lines of adjacent buildings at the first three floors.

CS2-D Height, Bulk, and Scale

CS2-D-1. Existing Development and Zoning: *Review the height, bulk, and scale of neighboring buildings as well as the scale of development anticipated by zoning for the area to determine an appropriate complement and/or transition.*

CS2-D-2. Existing Site Features: Use changes in topography, site shape, and vegetation or structures to help make a successful fit with adjacent properties.

CS2-D-3. Zone Transitions: *For projects located at the edge of different zones, provide an appropriate transition or complement to the adjacent zone(s). Projects should create a step in perceived height, bulk and scale between the anticipated development potential of the adjacent zone and the proposed development.*

CS2-D-4. Massing Choices: *Strive for a successful transition between zones where a project abuts a less intense zone.*

CS2-D-5. Respect for Adjacent Sites: *Respect adjacent properties with design and site planning to minimize disrupting the privacy of residents in adjacent buildings.*

CS3 Architectural Context and Character: Contribute to the architectural character of the neighborhood.

CS3-A Emphasizing Positive Neighborhood Attributes

CS3-A-1. Fitting Old and New Together: Create compatibility between new projects, and existing architectural context, including historic and modern designs, through building articulation, scale and proportion, roof forms, detailing, fenestration, and/or the use of complementary materials.

CS3-A-2. Contemporary Design: Explore how contemporary designs can contribute to the development of attractive new forms and architectural styles; as expressed through use of new materials or other means.

CS3-A-4. Evolving Neighborhoods: In neighborhoods where architectural character is evolving or otherwise in transition, explore ways for new development to establish a positive and desirable context for others to build upon in the future.

PUBLIC LIFE

PL1 Connectivity: Complement and contribute to the network of open spaces around the site and the connections among them.

PL1-A Network of Open Spaces

PL1-A-1. Enhancing Open Space: Design the building and open spaces to positively contribute to a broader network of open spaces throughout the neighborhood.

PL1-B Walkways and Connections

PL1-B-1. Pedestrian Infrastructure: Connect on-site pedestrian walkways with existing public and private pedestrian infrastructure, thereby supporting pedestrian connections within and outside the project.

PL1-B-3. Pedestrian Amenities: Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian oriented open spaces to enliven the area and attract interest and interaction with the site and building should be considered.

PL1-C Outdoor Uses and Activities

PL1-C-1. Selecting Activity Areas: Concentrate activity areas in places with sunny exposure, views across spaces, and in direct line with pedestrian routes.

PL2 Walkability: Create a safe and comfortable walking environment that is easy to navigate and well-connected to existing pedestrian walkways and features.

PL2-A Accessibility

PL2-A-1. Access for All: Provide access for people of all abilities in a manner that is fully integrated into the project design. Design entries and other primary access points such that all visitors can be greeted and welcomed through the front door.

PL2-A-2. Access Challenges: Add features to assist pedestrians in navigating sloped sites, long blocks, or other challenges.

PL2-B Safety and Security

PL2-B-1. Eyes on the Street: Create a safe environment by providing lines of sight and encouraging natural surveillance.

PL2-B-2. Lighting for Safety: Provide lighting at sufficient lumen intensities and scales, including pathway illumination, pedestrian and entry lighting, and/or security lights.

PL2-C Weather Protection

PL2-C-1. Locations and Coverage: Overhead weather protection is encouraged and should be located at or near uses that generate pedestrian activity such as entries, retail uses, and transit stops.

PL2-C-2. Design Integration: Integrate weather protection, gutters and downspouts into the design of the structure as a whole, and ensure that it also relates well to neighboring buildings in design, coverage, or other features.

PL2-C-3. People-Friendly Spaces: Create an artful and people-friendly space beneath building canopies by using human-scale architectural elements and a pattern of forms and/or textures at intervals along the façade..

PL2-D Wayfinding

PL2-D-1. Design as Wayfinding: Use design features as a means of wayfinding wherever possible.

PL3 Street-Level Interaction: Encourage human interaction and activity at the street-level with clear connections to building entries and edges.

PL3-A Entries

PL3-A-1. Design Objectives: Design primary entries to be obvious, identifiable, and distinctive with clear lines of sight and lobbies visually connected to the street.

PL3-A-2. Common Entries: Multi-story residential buildings need to provide privacy and security for residents but also be welcoming and identifiable to visitors.

PL3-A-4. Ensemble of Elements: *Design the entry as a collection of coordinated elements including the door(s), overhead features, ground surface, landscaping, lighting, and other features.*

PL4-B Planning Ahead for Bicyclists

PL4-B-1. Early Planning: Consider existing and future bicycle traffic to and through the site early in the process so that access and connections are integrated into the project along with other modes of travel.

PL4-B-2. Bike Facilities: *Facilities such as bike racks and storage, bike share stations, shower facilities and lockers for bicyclists should be located to maximize convenience, security, and safety.*

DESIGN CONCEPT

DC1 Project Uses and Activities: Optimize the arrangement of uses and activities on site.

DC1-C Parking and Service Uses

DC1-C-4. Service Uses: *Locate and design service entries, loading docks, and trash receptacles away from pedestrian areas or to a less visible portion of the site to reduce possible impacts of these facilities on building aesthetics and pedestrian circulation.*

DC2 Architectural Concept: Develop an architectural concept that will result in a unified and functional design that fits well on the site and within its surroundings.

DC2-A Massing

DC2-A-1. Site Characteristics and Uses: Arrange the mass of the building taking into consideration the characteristics of the site and the proposed uses of the building and its open space.

DC2-A-2. Reducing Perceived Mass: *Use secondary architectural elements to reduce the perceived mass of larger projects.*

DC2-B Architectural and Facade Composition

DC2-B-1. Façade Composition: *Design all building facades—including alleys and visible roofs— considering the composition and architectural expression of the building as a whole. Ensure that all facades are attractive and well-proportioned.*

DC2-B-2. Blank Walls: *Avoid large blank walls along visible façades wherever possible. Where expanses of blank walls, retaining walls, or garage facades are unavoidable, include uses or design treatments at the street level that have human scale and are designed for pedestrians.*

DC2-C Secondary Architectural Features

DC2-C-3. Fit With Neighboring Buildings: *Use design elements to achieve a successful fit between a building and its neighbors.*

DC2-D Scale and Texture

DC2-D-1. Human Scale: Incorporate architectural features, elements, and details that are of human scale into the building facades, entries, retaining walls, courtyards, and exterior spaces in a manner that is consistent with the overall architectural concept

DC2-D-2. Texture: Design the character of the building, as expressed in the form, scale, and materials, to strive for a fine-grained scale, or “texture,” particularly at the street level and other areas where pedestrians predominate.

DC2-E Form and Function

DC2-E-1. Legibility and Flexibility: Strive for a balance between building use legibility and flexibility. Design buildings such that their primary functions and uses can be readily determined from the exterior, making the building easy to access and understand. At the same time, design flexibility into the building so that it may remain useful over time even as specific programmatic needs evolve.

DC3 Open Space Concept: *Integrate open space design with the building design so that they complement each other.*

DC3-A Building-Open Space Relationship

DC3-A-1. Interior/Exterior Fit: Develop an open space concept in conjunction with the architectural concept to ensure that interior and exterior spaces relate well to each other and support the functions of the development.

DC3-B Open Space Uses and Activities

DC3-B-1. Meeting User Needs: Plan the size, uses, activities, and features of each open space to meet the needs of expected users, ensuring each space has a purpose and function.

DC3-B-2. Matching Uses to Conditions: Respond to changing environmental conditions such as seasonal and daily light and weather shifts through open space design and/or programming of open space activities.

DC3-B-4. Multifamily Open Space: Design common and private open spaces in multifamily projects for use by all residents to encourage physical activity and social interaction.

DC3-C Design

DC3-C-2. Amenities/Features: Create attractive outdoor spaces suited to the uses envisioned for the project.

DC3-C-3. Support Natural Areas: *Create an open space design that retains and enhances onsite natural areas and connects to natural areas that may exist off-site and may provide habitat for wildlife.*

DC4 Exterior Elements and Finishes: Use appropriate and high quality elements and finishes for the building and its open spaces.

DC4-A Exterior Elements and Finishes

DC4-A-1. Exterior Finish Materials: Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive even when viewed up close. Materials that have texture, pattern, or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.

DC4-A-2. Climate Appropriateness: Select durable and attractive materials that will age well in Seattle's climate, taking special care to detail corners, edges, and transitions.

DC4-C Lighting

DC4-C-2. Avoiding Glare: *Design project lighting based upon the uses on and off site, taking care to provide illumination to serve building needs while avoiding off-site night glare and light pollution.*

DC4-D Trees, Landscape, and Hardscape Materials

DC4-D-1. Choice of Plant Materials: Reinforce the overall architectural and open space design concepts through the selection of landscape materials.

DC4-D-2. Hardscape Materials: Use exterior courtyards, plazas, and other hard surfaced areas as an opportunity to add color, texture, and/or pattern and enliven public areas through the use of distinctive and durable paving materials. Use permeable materials wherever possible.

DC4-D-3. Long Range Planning: Select plants that upon maturity will be of appropriate size, scale, and shape to contribute to the site as intended.

DC4-D-4. Place Making: Create a landscape design that helps define spaces with significant elements such as trees.

FINAL EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING – November 17, 2014

The schemes shown at the Second EDG meeting showed some further differentiation within the three schemes. Option A, described as Code-compliant and not requiring any departures, showed a prominent front façade overhanging a well-defined, elevated entry located at the southeast corner of the site, with multiple prominent decks overlooking the property to the west. Option B also located the front entry at the southeast corner of the site, but would require a departure from the requirement for a 15-foot setback above the 13-foot height level along the west property line. The top level would be set back from the west property line, but would provide a deck along the entire façade. More of the units would be oriented in a north-south direction in this scheme and decks would be provided on the south façade above the ground floor. Option C would pull the mass of the building further from the west property line, except for units encroaching into the northwest corner of the site which would require the departure for providing less than a 15-foot upper separation from the property line to the west. This scheme, described as the applicant's "preferred" scheme, would provide a below-grade amenity strip for basement units along a portion of the west area of the site, but with decks only at the fourth level. Amenity space for the building's residents would be provided at the roof level, along its southeast edge.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comment included the following:

- A question whether garbage would be collected at the alley since there is no residential garbage collection at the alley at present;
- Questions regarding shadow impacts on properties located to the north, northeast and northwest across the alley;
- The project needs a shadow study that deals with the property to the west and to properties north, northwest and northeast across the alley. The Board thought that the shadow study presented at the November 17th meeting failed adequately to represent the year-round impacts of shadows on the properties across the alley and north of the proposal; they requested that a more thorough shadow study, one that would place particular emphasis on the “shoulder seasons” of the year, should be presented at the time the project returned to the Board for a Recommendation meeting.

BOARD PRIORITIES

- The Board acknowledged the greater range of alternatives presented than had been the case at the first EDG meeting;
- The third scheme, Option C, was generally thought to show the greatest promise and the greatest “respect” for the adjacent LR1 zone;
- The basement units remained troubling for members of the Board, and the Board would like to see studies that would better convey some of the experience of inhabiting the units and the below-grade amenity space adjacent the units;
- The Board would like to see a more comprehensive study of the shadows from the proposed structure, at a broader scope of times, as these impact the structures and yards of the neighbors to the north across the alley;
- The Board would like to see more analysis and details of how the entry sequence works and how the interface of building entry and landscaping and sidewalk will be laid out and layered;
- The Board would expect to hear a better rationale for the requested departure required for Option C, namely one that would indicate how the departure, if granted, would better meet the intentions of the guidelines (identified).

The priority Citywide and Neighborhood guidelines identified by the Board as Priority Guidelines after the first EDG meeting were revisited and selectively focused to give the applicants a clearer sense of the Board’s priorities for the development of the project, keeping in mind that all of the guidelines, except those exempted because they have no applicability to the site, are applicable to the proposal.

The following additional guidance was offered:

CS1-D-2. Off-site features: *The emphasis was on the relationship of building and the two trees located offsite on the adjoining property to the west.*

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

At the time of the FIRST Early Design Guidance held on August 25, 2014, no departures were requested. The Board suggested then that a carefully selected set of departures might help to resolve some of the complex issues of the site and that they would be willing to entertain a

request for departures should they be shown to make for a better design that served both the inhabitants of the building and improved the structure's relationships to neighbors of the building.

At the Second Early Design Guidance meeting the applicants indicated the following departure would be required for their preferred Option C: SMC 23.47A.014.3 would require a 15-foot setback along the west property line since the building site abuts a lot in a residential zone (LR1, in this instance); the setback is required to be 15 feet for portions of the structure above 13 feet in height.

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the FINAL EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE meeting, the Board voted (4-1) for the project to proceed to MUP application developing the preferred Option C.

RECOMMENDATION MEETING - August 17, 2015

As explained by the design team, the current design was largely a response to the two large trees (one a City of Seattle "Exceptional Tree") located near the development's west property line. Desirous of maintaining the health of the two trees, the applicant proposes an L-shaped structure that provides a relatively wide open area along the adjacent structure to the west.

The applicant proceeded with a summation of an understanding of the Board's guidance from the second EDG meeting held in November 2014. The Board had indicated that the applicant's 3rd scheme, which hugged the eastern property line and pulled away from the single-family structure to the west was the most promising. The current design shows all levels with a single-loaded corridor located along the east edge of the structure. While decks occur at the second through the fourth levels along the south façade, they occur only at the fourth level of the west façade in a gesture to respect the privacy of the adjacent residence. The roof-deck amenity area has been located along the east edge of the structure, situating activities away from the adjacent residential use as well.

The Board had asked to see more analysis and details of how the entry sequence works and how the interface of building entry and landscaping and sidewalk will be laid out and layered.

It was explained that the entry sequence was developed to allow for pedestrian stairway access directly from the sidewalk at a location closest to 15th Avenue NW and ADA access by means of a ramp from the sidewalk along the western edge of the site. The bulkhead along the sidewalk and raised entry levels was consistent with other residences to the west along NW 61st Street and the elevated entry met the height separation dictated by the Land Use Code.

The Board had requested that the design team provide further shadow studies based upon the preferred scheme.

The proffered shadow study shows that the building's shading impact at multiple times throughout the year. At the maximum shading occurrence, December 21st at 2:00 PM, the project as designed would have less impact than the maximum building envelope that would be allowed by Code. This has been achieved by placement of the circulation cores and rooftop access toward the middle of the building and away from the northern edge.

Among other salient features of the current design:

- The bicycle storage area, intended to store 18 bikes, announces itself very visibly and conveniently at the ground-level, front (southwest) corner of the building.
- Garbage and recycling storage is located at the northeast corner, totally enclosed within the structure and adjacent to the commercial building to the east for alley pickup.
- The material palette generally consists of “warm” neutral colors, intended to blend with other treatments of residential uses in the area.
- The treatment of the massing and the façade expressions are differentiated between a regular, flat-roofed, box-like commercial expression at the eastern edge of the site and a lighter but more expressive “townhouse vernacular” style with pitched roofline for the rest of the structure, the two modalities being stitched together with horizontal banding.
- Several expressions and treatments of the largely blank eastern façade were shown, including a dynamic scheme featuring abstract circle patterning, which elicited a strongly favorable response from the Board members.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comment included the following:

- Concerns regarding the lack of parking.
- No objections to the design, but thought it bland.
- A concern regarding the noise generated from the top-floor, west facing decks.
- A question regarding the amount of landscaping proposed, both on site and along the sidewalk in front. (*Plan calls for new street trees, ground cover in planting strip, 5-foot landscaped strip along west property line and west half of lot at alley, as well as 2-foot strip inside sidewalk abutting bulkhead*).

BOARD DELIBERATIONS

Façade Design / Materials:

The board discussed how the materials had been applied to the “commercial bar” and the residential element. The board felt that the design *parti* read through, but questioned the treatment of the top portion of the residential volume beneath the sloped roof, the entablature, and it’s being expressed by the same color and materials as the “commercial bar.” The board did not set conditions, but they did strongly encourage the applicant to further explore the materiality below the roof and work through an acceptable solution with the Land Use Planner.

The board was in agreement that the applicant’s preferred option for the East Façade was suitable and felt that the abstract, circular pattern would be a successful solution to the blank wall in this zero lot line condition.

The board had concerns about the durability of the natural cedar siding and suggested a more durable composite material would be preferable.

Basement Units:

The board appreciated the improvement made since the EDG presentations to the lower level units, but there was concern about the southern-most lower level unit's ability to access light. The board members felt that by lifting the first level to the code-prescribed four feet above sidewalk grade and the construction of an ADA ramp the unit's light and air access was being compromised. The board decided to offer a departure of the 4' above sidewalk grade requirement (SMC 23.47A.012.1a.1b), if the design team would consider lowering the building and re-designing the access ramp.

There was some disagreement about the bike storage location, with one board member expressing that it would be better to have the bike storage below grade, and provide a unit (the southernmost basement unit) at its current location, with better access to light and air. The other board members did not agree, and felt the transparency of the proposed bike storage location was a successful choice and strategy

Decks:

The board discussed the west-facing decks at level 4 and their impact on the privacy of the neighboring property. The board noted that while there are always privacy concerns where zones abut, the size of the decks and their location at only level 4 mitigated noise and privacy concerns. The board requested, however, that the transparent / wire railings be replaced with a material (either opaque or translucent) that would block direct sight lines that could compromise the privacy of the adjacent dwelling or the decks themselves.

DEPARTURE

A good deal of the Board's discussion focused on the requested departure (SMC 23.47A.014.B.3.a). Board members questioned how the proposed departure improved the building massing and design, how it better met the design guidelines and whether it effectively represented a better response to the neighboring property. Some members of the board argued that the proposed departure created a better streetscape along NW 61st, presenting a preferred urban form along the street, and created a significant separation between the building and the adjacent residence along approximately 80 percent of the west property line. The board appreciated the protection afforded the southern, adjacent fir tree, but expressed some concern with the impact of the departure on the northern neighboring fir tree. The board voted 2 – 1 to approve the requested departure.

Design Review Board Decision

At the end of their deliberations the three Board members present unanimously agreed to approve the applicant's proposed design with the following guidance and conditions.

The West facing level 4 decks shall be faced with something more solid materially or at least with materials configured to block vision from residents looking down into the adjacent property. The material could be either opaque, translucent, or perforated (but would have to meet the requirements of SMC 23.47A.014.E.1).

The East façade shall have the dynamic circular geometric, abstract patterning presented in the recommendation packet.

The offer of a departure from the 4' required height difference between the sidewalk and residential use (SMC 23.47A.008.D) is available and recommended for approval by the Board if the design team should choose to use it to improve the light and air access to the lower level units. Any improvements shall be made with the approval of the Land Use Planner assigned to the project. *(Subsequently, the design team explored the Board's suggestion, but concluded, with the approval of the Land Use Planner, that lowering the building was fraught with untoward consequences that did not ameliorate the condition of the proposed below ground units.)*

ANALYSIS & DECISION- DESIGN REVIEW

Director's Analysis and Decision

The three members of the Board attending the Recommendation Meeting on August 17, 2015 provided the recommendations (listed above) to the Director and identified elements of the Design Guidelines that would be critical to the project's overall success. The Director of DPD has reviewed the decision and recommendations of the Design Review Board made at the Recommendation meeting and finds that they are consistent with the City of Seattle Design Review Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings. The Director agrees with the Design Review Board's conclusion that the proposed project as presented at the August 17, 2015 meeting would result in a design that best meets the intent of the applicable Design Guidelines. Therefore, the Director accepts the Design Review Board's recommendations regarding their approval of the design, and **APPROVES the proposed design and the requested departure from development standards.**

Design Review Conditions

(See below.)

ANALYSIS – SEPA

Environmental review resulting in a Threshold Determination is required pursuant to the Seattle State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), WAC 197-11, and the Seattle SEPA Ordinance (Seattle Municipal Code Chapter 25.05) because the proposed project exceeds the 12,000 square foot size threshold.

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the environmental checklist submitted by the applicant, dated January 5, 2015. The information in the checklist, supplemental documentation, pertinent public comment, and the experience of the lead agency with review of similar projects form the basis for this analysis and decision.

The Department of Planning and Development has analyzed the environmental checklist which was submitted by the project applicant and reviewed the project plans and any additional information in the file. As indicated in this analysis, this action will result in impacts to the environment. However, due to their temporary nature and limited effects, the impacts are not expected to be significant.

The SEPA Overview Policy (SM C 25.05.665) clarifies the relationship between codes, policies and environmental review. Specific policies for each element of the environment, and certain

neighborhood plans and other policies explicitly referenced, may serve as the basis for exercising substantive SEPA authority. The Overview Policy states in part, “*Where City regulations have been adopted to address and environmental impact, it shall be presumed that such regulations are adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation,*” subject to some limitations.

Short-Term Impacts

The following temporary or construction-related impacts are expected: decreased air quality due to suspended particulates from demolition and building activities and hydrocarbon emissions from construction vehicles and equipment; increased dust caused by drying mud tracked onto streets during construction activities; increased traffic and demand for parking from construction equipment and personnel; increased noise; and consumption of renewable and nonrenewable resources. Several adopted codes and/or ordinances provide mitigation for some of the identified impacts:

- Near-full site excavation for below-grade basement and residential units will produce excess soil to be removed from the site. The excess material to be disposed of must be deposited in an approved site.
- The Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code regulates site excavation for foundation purposes and requires that soil erosion control techniques be initiated for the duration of construction.
- The Street Use Ordinance requires watering streets to suppress dust, on-site washing of truck tires, and removal of debris and regulates obstruction of the pedestrian right-of-way.
- PSCAA regulations require control of fugitive dust to protect air quality. The Building Code provides for construction measures in general.
- Finally, the Noise Ordinance regulates the time and amount of construction noise that is permitted in the city.

Most short-term impacts are expected to be minor, and compliance with existing applicable codes and ordinances will reduce or eliminate most short-term impacts to the environment.

Compliance with these applicable codes and ordinances will reduce or eliminate most short-term impacts to the environment. However, given the amount of building activity to be undertaken in association with the proposed project, additional analysis of drainage, grading, traffic, circulation and parking, noise, and greenhouse gases is warranted.

Drainage

Soil disturbing activities during site excavation for foundation purposes could result in erosion and transport of sediment. The Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code provides for extensive review and conditioning of the project prior to issuance of building permits. Therefore, no further conditioning is warranted pursuant to SEPA policies.

Earth - Grading

Construction plans will be reviewed by DPD. Any additional information showing conformance with applicable ordinances and codes will be required prior to issuance of building permits. Applicable codes and ordinances provide extensive conditioning authority and prescriptive construction methodology to assure safe construction techniques are used; therefore, no additional conditioning is warranted pursuant to SEPA policies.

The Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code requires preparation of a soils report to evaluate the site conditions and provide recommendations for safe construction on sites where grading will involve cuts or fills of greater than three feet in height or grading greater than 100 cubic yards of material. The current proposal involves excavation of approximately 642 Cubic Yards of soils on site. Haul routes must be approved in advance by SDOT and the project will be conditioned to ensure approved haul routes that will be included in the Contractor's Construction Management Plan.

A Geotechnical Report by GeoEngineers, dated March 16, 2012, was submitted with this application and was reviewed and approved by DPD. The Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code provides extensive conditioning authority and prescriptive construction methodology to assure safe construction techniques are used, therefore, no additional conditioning is warranted pursuant to SEPA policies.

Traffic, Circulation and Parking

Construction activities are expected to affect the surrounding area. Impacts to traffic and roads are expected from truck trips during excavation and construction activities. The construction activities will require the removal of material from the site and can be expected to generate truck trips to and from the site. In addition, delivery of concrete and other materials to the site will generate truck trips.

During demolition and construction, the existing City code (SMC 11.62) requires truck activities to use arterial streets to the greatest extent possible. For the removal and disposal of the spoil materials, the Code (SMC 11.74) provides that material hauled in trucks not be spilled during transport. The City requires that a minimum of one foot of "freeboard" (area from level of material to the top of the truck container) be provided in loaded uncovered trucks to minimize the amount of spilled material and dust from the truck bed travelling to or from a site.

The Street Use Ordinance requires sweeping or watering streets to suppress dust, on-site washing of truck tires and removal of debris, and regulates obstruction of the pedestrian right-of-way. This ordinance provides adequate mitigation for these construction transportation impacts; therefore, no additional conditioning is warranted pursuant to SEPA policies.

On-street parking in the neighborhood is limited, and the demand for parking by construction workers during construction could exacerbate the demand for on-street parking and result in an adverse impact on surrounding properties. The owner and/or responsible party shall assure that construction vehicles and equipment are parked on the subject site or on a dedicated site within 800 feet for the term of the construction, whenever possible.

To facilitate these efforts, a Construction Management Plan will be required as a condition of approval, to be reviewed and approved by DPD and SDOT prior to issuance of any permits to construct and identifying construction worker parking and construction materials staging areas; truck access routes to and from the site for excavation and construction phases as approved by SDOT; and sidewalk and street closures with neighborhood notice and posting procedures.

Noise

Mitigation for construction impacts is subject to the SEPA Overview Policy. Construction activities are subject to the Noise Ordinance. Because of adjacent and nearby residential uses,

construction on Sundays shall be prohibited. All construction activities are subject to the limitations of the Noise Ordinance. Construction activities (including but not limited to demolition, grading, deliveries, framing, roofing, and painting) shall be limited to non-holiday weekdays from 7am to 7pm and Saturdays between 9am and 6pm. Non-noisy activities, such as site security, monitoring, weather protection shall not be limited by this condition.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Construction activities, including construction worker commutes, truck trips, the operation of construction equipment and machinery, and the manufacture of the construction materials themselves, result in increases in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions which adversely impact air quality and contribute to climate change and global warming. While these impacts are adverse, they are not expected to be significant.

Long-Term Impacts — Use-Related Impacts

Height, Bulk and Scale

The SEPA Height, Bulk and Scale Policy (25.05.675.G) states that:

“...the height, bulk and scale of development projects should be reasonably compatible with the general character of development anticipated by the goals and policies...for the area in which they are located, and to provide for a reasonable transition between areas of less intensive zoning and more intensive zoning.”

In addition, the Policy states that:

“A project that is approved pursuant to the Design Review Process shall be presumed to comply with these Height, Bulk and Scale policies. This presumption may be rebutted only by clear and convincing evidence that height, bulk and scale impacts documented through environmental review have not been adequately mitigated.”

The proposed development would proceed according to Land Use Code standards for the proposed zone. The development as a whole will be in keeping with the scale of development anticipated by the goals and policies for the existing zoning and the Comprehensive Plan. In addition, in approving the project, the Design Review Board gave particular attention to the height, bulk and scale relationship of the proposal to its surroundings. There is no evidence that height, bulk and scale impacts have been inadequately mitigated through the Design Review Board process. Therefore, no mitigation of height, bulk and scale impacts is warranted pursuant to SEPA.

Traffic

According to the Transportation Impact Analysis (TIA) completed by Gibson Traffic Consultants in June 2015, and submitted by the applicant, the proposed development is estimated to generate 128.42 net new daily trips, with 11.87 new trips occurring during a weekday PM peak hour. While these impacts may be adverse, they are not expected to be significant as they affect existing and future conditions. The project would meet the City's transportation concurrency requirements. No off-site mitigation measures would be required to offset the transportation related impacts of the project.

Parking

No parking for the proposed project would be provided Per Seattle Municipal Code (SMC 23.54.015), there is no minimum parking requirement for the development. A total peak parking demand of 19 vehicles is estimated for the residential uses in the Gibson Traffic Consultants study. Ten additional pipeline projects in the area will include a total of 21 total on-site parking spaces, but are expected to add, with the subject project, a demand for 44 on street parking spaces. An on-street parking utilization study undertaken as part of the Gibson TIA concludes that the net impact on the study area would be 86% parking utilization without the subject project, but would reach 95% with the 1506 NW 61st Street development. Although these parking impacts, especially in the aggregate, could prove to be adverse, there is no SEPA authority to mitigate such parking impacts.

Greenhouse Gas

Operational activities, primarily vehicular trips associated with the project and the projects' energy consumption, are expected to result in increases in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions which adversely impact air quality and contribute to climate change and global warming. Over the life of the project the total greenhouse gas emissions are expected to equal 65,138 MTCO₂e. While these impacts are adverse, they are not expected to be significant.

DECISION — STATE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (SEPA)

This decision was made after review by the responsible official on behalf of the lead agency of a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the responsible department. This constitutes the Threshold Determination. The intent of this declaration is to satisfy the requirements of the State Environmental Policy Act (RCW 43.21 C), including the requirement to inform the public of agency decisions pursuant to SEPA.

[X] Determination of Non-Significance. This proposal has been determined to not have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is not required under RCW 43.21 C.030(2)(c).

CONDITIONS-DESIGN REVIEW

Prior to MUP Issuance

1. The applicant shall update the MUP plans to incorporate the Design Review Board's Conditions of Approval generated at the Recommendation Meeting of August 17, 2015, namely:
 - The abstract, circular pattern shown as an option to alleviate a blank upper wall on the east façade should be incorporated into the final, approved design of that façade.
 - The natural cedar siding shown at various places on the Board approved design should be replaced with a more durable material that conveys the same texture and color.
 - The transparent wire railings on the decks on the west façade should be replaced with materials that would deflect direct sight lines and not compromise the privacy of the dwelling adjacent to the west of the proposal site.

CONDITIONS -SEPA

Prior to Issuance of Any Building Permits

2. The applicant shall initiate coordination with SDOT regarding an allowed Truck Traffic Route to be reviewed and approved by SDOT prior to issuance of any construction permits. Contact Don Smith at SDOT for all requirements needed for SDOT review (206-684-5125).
3. The applicant shall provide for DPD and SDOT approval a Construction Management Plan which shall include anticipated hours of construction, any anticipated street, alley or sidewalk closers, details of SDOT approved hours and truck access routes to and from the site, construction worker parking, efforts at noise attenuation, contractor contact information for neighbors to the project, as well as other pertinent information regarding the projected course of construction.

During Construction

4. Construction on Sundays shall be prohibited. All construction activities are subject to the limitations of the Noise Ordinance. Construction activities (including but not limited to demolition, grading, deliveries, framing, roofing, and painting) shall be limited to non-holiday weekdays from 7am to 7pm and Saturdays from 9am to 6pm. Non-noisy activities, such as site security, monitoring, and providing emergency weather protection shall not be limited by this condition.

Michael Dorcy, Senior Land Use Planner
Department of Planning and Development

Date: December 14, 2015

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ISSUANCE OF YOUR MASTER USE PERMIT

Master Use Permit Expiration and Issuance

The appealable land use decision on your Master Use Permit (MUP) application has now been published. At the conclusion of the appeal period, your permit will be considered "approved for issuance". (If your decision is appealed, your permit will be considered "approved for issuance" on the fourth day following the City Hearing Examiner's decision.) Projects requiring a Council land use action shall be considered "approved for issuance" following the Council's decision.

The "approved for issuance" date marks the beginning of the **three year life** of the MUP approval, whether or not there are outstanding corrections to be made or pre-issuance conditions to be met. The permit must be issued by DPD within that three years or it will expire and be cancelled (SMC 23-76-028). (Projects with a shoreline component have a **two year life**. Additional information regarding the effective date of shoreline permits may be found at 23.60.074.)

All outstanding corrections must be made, any pre-issuance conditions met and all outstanding fees paid before the permit is issued. You will be notified when your permit has issued.

Questions regarding the issuance and expiration of your permit may be addressed to the Public Resource Center at prc@seattle.gov or to our message line at 206-684-8467.